

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL FINDINGS

- North Carolina has diverse ocean and coastal resources that are the foundation of a strong coastal and state economy.
- North Carolina's coastal travel and tourism industries contribute 40,000 jobs and \$2.6 billion to North Carolina's economy and depend on public access to clean beaches, estuaries and waters and abundant fisheries.
- North Carolina's commercial and recreational fishing industries contribute 27,000 jobs and \$116 million annually to North Carolina's economy.
- North Carolina's estuaries support massively productive fish populations, including many of the historical drivers of fisheries and societies in the region (herrings, shads, striped bass, sturgeon, and eels, among others) and nearshore spawners tied to brackish-water primary and secondary nursery areas (blue crabs, shrimps, drums, flounders and many other fish).
- North Carolina's beaches and barrier islands sustain large populations of migratory animals from bluefish to seabirds and shorebirds.
- The North Carolina coastal system has a complex geologic framework with major differences occurring between inshore and offshore segments as well as between the north and south continental shelf components.
- Exploration and development of offshore-energy resources – oil and natural gas, wind and hydrokinetic technologies and thermal – pose environmental and economic benefits and risks (environmental benefits include potentially providing habitat) to North Carolinians and Americans.
- The development of any source of offshore energy, whether renewable or fossil fuel, will likely have some socioeconomic and environmental impacts, including those on marine and estuarine waters and those on the species that inhabit these waters. General impacts include: habitat alteration during installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of new offshore-energy facilities; impacts from transmission crossings in North Carolina's coastal zone; debris from storm-damaged facilities; minor toxicant releases; conflicts with and displacement of other ocean users; indirect and cumulative impacts; and worker safety. Revenue sharing from any offshore resources has been important for states that receive it. Revenue and royalty sharing are essential components to North Carolina's development of offshore energy.
- Many decisions related to offshore energy are made at the federal level.
- Offshore wind, oil, gas, or other offshore-energy development will have challenges related to infrastructure development, including transmission.
- Even with aggressive conservation measures, such as greater fuel efficiency standards for cars, the demand for energy in the U.S. and N.C. is likely to continue to grow. U.S. dependence on imported energy has many negative consequences to the nation's economy, including affecting the international balance of payments, reducing the value of the U.S. dollar, increasing inflationary pressures, living under economic uncertainties about oil-supply disruptions and price hikes, and risking engagement in military actions overseas to preserve access to oil supplies.
- Although N.C.'s energy development policy must balance different risks and benefits as compared to the national energy policy, development of North Carolina's energy resources is intertwined with national energy policy.